BRITISH COLUMBIA

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highlights

a weekly digest of recently released British Columbia statistics

Population

- **British Columbia's population grew by 2.0% between July 1, 1996 and July 1, 1997, with the growth becoming more evenly distributed across the province.** Growth rates in the Lower Mainland, the Capital region and the Okanagan have slowed in the past year, while rates in the less urban regions have increased.

  Among municipalities with a population greater than 10,000, three grew by more than 4% in 1997: Langford (4.5%), Courtenay (4.5%) and Port Moody (4.1%). The strong growth in Courtenay was partially the result of an extension of the city boundary. *Source: BC STATS*

Tourism GDP

- **British Columbia's tourism sector grew faster than the provincial economy for the fifth straight year in 1996.** The sector's real gross domestic product (GDP) at factor cost increased 1.4%, compared to overall economic growth of 1.0%. For most of the period since 1991, the tourism sector has grown about half a percentage point faster than the economy as a whole. 1995 was an exception to this, when tourism GDP increased 2.3% at a time when the economy was growing 1.0%.

  Despite its above-average performance, GDP growth in the tourism sector last year was the lowest it has been since 1991. The slowdown in the provincial economy during 1995 and 1996 may have tempered growth in tourism, reducing travel by British Columbians. However, economic growth elsewhere helped keep the provincial tourism sector relatively buoyant compared to other industries. *Source: BC STATS*

Retail Sales

- **Retail sales in British Columbia were unchanged at $2.8 billion (seasonally adjusted) in September.** Nationally, retail sales rose only marginally, increasing 0.3% over the August level. Sales were moderate in most parts of the country, with the strongest gains occurring in Yukon (3.9%), NWT (2.1%), and Alberta and Saskatchewan (both at 2.0%). Sales dropped 0.7% in Ontario, and were also down in parts of Atlantic Canada.

  Retail sales in the province have been volatile during 1997, with growth spurts offset by periods of decline. After starting the third quarter on a high note (with a 3.7% increase in July) sales growth in BC slowed, and as a result the total gain for the three-month period from July to September was 1.7%. Canadian sales were also up 1.7% in the third quarter. On a year to date basis, BC retail sales are up 5.3% over last year. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Unadjusted retail sales data show strong gains in BC's food sector, with sales increasing 8.5% over the third quarter of last year, compared to a 6.5% gain at the national level.** Although BC's inflation rate has remained below the national average during the last year, food prices in BC have been increasing faster than in the rest of the country (3.7% in the third quarter, compared to 1.7% nationally). This partially explains the stronger sales growth at food stores in the province. In the automotive sector, sales were up 7.1% (compared to 10.5% nationally). However, furniture sales in the province were only 2.5% higher than in the third quarter of 1996, while they increased 10.9% at the national level. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Report **1997 Municipal Population Estimates**

Did you know...?
In 1997, one in five Canadian households had a cellular telephone.

Employment and Earnings

- **The number of British Columbians receiving regular employment insurance (EI) benefits increased 1.0% to 68,500 in September.** Nationally, there were 1.8% more EI beneficiaries (593,220) than in August. The number of beneficiaries rose in seven of the ten provinces and in NWT, with Alberta (+7.2%) and Saskatchewan (+4.6%) recording the largest increases.
  Source: Statistics Canada

- **British Columbians earned an average wage of $615 weekly (seasonally adjusted) in September.** This was virtually unchanged from the previous month. At the national level, average weekly earnings were down marginally (-0.1%), to $598. Weekly earnings were flat or down in most parts of the country. Yukon (+2.0%), Quebec (+0.6%), Alberta (+0.3%) and Ontario (+0.1%) were the only regions where wages were higher than in August. *Source: Statistics Canada*

- **There were 146,193 employers with payroll deduction accounts (seasonally adjusted) in BC in the third quarter of 1997.** This was 0.4% more than in the second quarter this year. Fifteen percent of the 943,777 Canadian employers with payroll deduction accounts were located in British Columbia. Nationally, the number of accounts increased 0.3% in the third quarter. Alberta (+1.0%) recorded the strongest gain, followed by NWT (+0.8%) and BC (+0.4%). The number of employers registered with Revenue Canada rose in all parts of the country except Newfoundland (-0.4%).
  Source: Statistics Canada

Vacancy Rates

- **British Columbia's apartment vacancy rate increased to 3.5% this fall, up from 2.8% last year.** The increased availability of rental apartments in the province came as vacancy rates rose in most BC communities. In Vancouver, the apartment vacancy rate was 1.7%, up from a very low 1.1% last year. Generally a vacancy rate of from 2–2.5% is considered a balanced market condition for Vancouver. The increase in vacancy rates reflects a reduction in demand caused by declining migration and high levels of first-time home ownership. De spite the increase in vacancy rates, one-bedroom apartment rents rose 1.3% province-wide and 1.7% in metro Vancouver.
  Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

Internet Usage

- **British Columbia led the nation in the number of households connected to the internet**. In 1997, approximately 269,000 households or 18% had the ability to surf the web. Ontario and Alberta followed at 15% each. As expected, computer ownership was also highest in BC where four in ten households owned one. *Source: Statistics Canada*

Charitable Donations

- **Canadians recorded a greater amount of charitable donations in 1996**. Donations reported to Revenue Canada totalled $4 billion, up 11.5% from the previous year. The median donation remained unchanged at $150. Donations from the metropolitan area of Vancouver totalled $315.2 million in 1996, with a median contribution of $180. Prince George and Kamloops had median income donations of $160 and $140. *Source: Statistics Canada*

The Nation

- **The federal government's debt stood at $464 billion at the end of September.** This was 1.1% less than twelve months earlier, when the national debt was $469 billion. Almost $21 billion of the Canadian government's debt was payable in foreign currencies, with the bulk ($443) of the debt payable in Canadian dollars.
  Source: Federal Department of Finance, Fiscal Monitor

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For data originating from Statistics Canada: data sourced to 'Statistics Canada' has been retrieved from CANSIM, the agency's electronic database; otherwise the source is identified as 'SC' plus the publication name or catalogue number.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

Ministry of Finance and
Corporate Relations

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Release: November 1997

Municipal Population Estimates ◆ 1997

Population growth in British Columbia remains healthy and has become more evenly distributed in 1997.....

- Highlights -

- British Columbia continues to be the fastest growing province in Canada recording a population growth rate of 2.0 per cent, or 75,700 persons, between July 1, 1996 to July 1, 1997. This was approximately twice the national population growth rate of just over 1.0 per cent. Alberta follows closely behind at over 1.9 per cent growth. The primary cause of the strong rate of population growth is migration to British Columbia, particularly from other countries. Although interprovincial migration to British Columbia has slowed, it is still positive.

- On a sub-provincial basis, all regional districts in B.C. recorded population growth between 1996 and 1997, although the level of growth varied from region to region. The fastest growing region in percentage terms was Squamish-Lillooet (5.9%) due mainly to the popularity of Whistler. The only other regions to experience greater than four per cent growth were Central Coast (5.2%) and Fort Nelson-Liard (4.5%). The slowest growing regions were the Kootenay-Boundary (0.2%), Skeena-Queen Charlotte (0.2%) and Capital (0.9%) Regional Districts.

- Overall, growth rates across the province are evening out, with growth in all regions approaching the provincial rate. Growth rates in the Lower Mainland, the Capital region and the Okanagan have slowed, while rates in the less urban regions have increased.

- Of the larger municipalities (greater than 10,000 population), the top five growth areas between 1996 and 1997 were:

	1997 Population	% Growth 1996-97
Langford	18,926	4.5%
Courtenay	18,749	4.5%
Port Moody	22,442	4.1%
Salmon Arm	15,651	3.5%
Squamish	14,949	3.3%

Part of the growth in Courtenay is due to a boundary change which expanded the boundaries of the city. Population growth in Courtenay has been slowing in the last couple of years after several years in which it held the distinction of being the fastest growing of the larger communities in British Columbia.

Other highlights from the 1997 Municipal and Regional District Estimates include:

- Similar to last year, the total British Columbia growth rate (2.0%) is higher than the rate of growth of the sum of the incorporated municipalities (1.9%). This indicates that the rural unincorporated areas in British Columbia are growing at a faster rate than the more urban incorporated areas.

- Of those municipalities with over 10,000 population, the only ones to experience a population decline were all located in the Capital Regional District (CRD). Esquimalt, Oak Bay, Sidney and Victoria all experienced small declines in population, while more outlying areas, such as Highlands and Langford experienced strong growth. The 1997 population figures indicate that growth within the CRD is continuing to spread westward.

Municipal estimates are calculated by the Population Section of BC Stats through a regional estimation model that has been developed and refined over the past 17 years. This model, which uses indicators such as residential electrical connections and Old Age Security data, has enabled BC Stats to produce relatively accurate population estimates without the high cost of conducting a census.

Knowledge of population growth and where it occurs are vital to the planning process. For this reason the Municipal and Regional District Estimates are an important tool for the provincial and local governments in assessing current and future community needs.

Note: The population figures for 1996 and 1997 are estimates based on the 1996 Census; however, estimates of net census undercount are preliminary and these figures will be adjusted once actual net census undercount figures are available from Statistics Canada in the fall of 1998. The intercensal estimates for 1992 through 1995 will also be revised to account for any discrepancies between the Census figures plus net census undercount as released by Statistics Canada and the estimates produced by BC Stats.

The table on the following pages as well as tables covering the 1976 to 1995 period (including revisions for 1992 to 1995) can be found in the population section on the BC Stats web site:
http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BRITISH COLUMBIA

BC STATS

Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations

Contact: Dan Schrier
Tel: (250) 387-0334
Release: November 1997

British Columbia Municipal and Regional District Population Estimates

Name	Area Type	Estimate 1996†	1996-97 % Δ	Estimate 1997
Alberni-Clayoquot		**32,689**	**2.6**	**33,533**
Port Alberni	C *	19,084	3.0	19,664
Tofino	DM	1,214	5.7	1,283
Ucluelet	DM	1,719	0.6	1,729
Bulkley-Nechako		**43,047**	**2.4**	**44,073**
Burns Lake	VL	1,859	1.1	1,880
Fort St. James	DM	2,119	0.5	2,130
Fraser Lake	VL	1,395	-3.7	1,343
Granisle	VL	460	1.7	468
Houston	DM	4,072	4.0	4,235
Smithers	T	5,828	2.0	5,944
Telkwa	VL	1,234	7.7	1,329
Vanderhoof	DM	4,558	2.5	4,672
Capital		**330,108**	**0.9**	**333,074**
Central Saanich	DM	15,066	1.1	15,230
Colwood	C	14,302	1.1	14,461
Esquimalt	DM	16,779	-0.1	16,765
Highlands	DM	1,469	3.6	1,522
Langford	DM	18,111	4.5	18,926
Metchosin	DM	4,857	1.3	4,922
North Saanich	DM	10,706	1.1	10,829
Oak Bay	DM	18,450	-0.6	18,341
Saanich	DM	104,913	1.2	106,207
Sidney	T	11,072	-0.4	11,029
Victoria	C	76,690	0.0	76,671
View Royal	T	6,656	3.0	6,859
Cariboo		**69,192**	**3.1**	**71,323**
Quesnel	C	8,770	3.0	9,031
Williams Lake	C	10,840	2.6	11,124
100 Mile House	DM	1,914	5.4	2,017
Central Coast		**4,055**	**5.2**	**4,265**
Central Kootenay		**59,948**	**1.3**	**60,725**
Castlegar	C	7,260	0.6	7,307
Creston	T	4,983	2.0	5,082
Kaslo	VL	1,095	1.1	1,107
Nakusp	VL	1,798	0.6	1,809
Nelson	C	9,908	0.0	9,906
New Denver	VL	598	1.0	604
Salmo	VL	1,239	1.0	1,252
Silverton	VL	248	1.6	252
Slocan	VL	345	0.0	345
Central Okanagan		**141,156**	**2.8**	**145,177**
Kelowna	C	92,621	2.2	94,656
Lake Country	DM	9,279	2.4	9,504
Peachland	DM	4,657	2.4	4,770

British Columbia Municipal and Regional District Population Estimates

Name	Area Type	Estimate 1996†	1996-97 % Δ	Estimate 1997
Columbia-Shuswap		**49,637**	**2.3**	**50,765**
Golden	T	4,103	1.7	4,171
Revelstoke	C	8,311	0.5	8,356
Salmon Arm	DM	15,128	3.5	15,651
Sicamous	DM	2,916	2.4	2,986
Comox-Strathcona		**100,788**	**2.4**	**103,169**
Campbell River	DM	29,825	2.9	30,701
Comox	T	11,407	1.9	11,627
Courtenay	C *	17,949	4.5	18,749
Cumberland	VL	2,629	3.7	2,725
Gold River	VL	2,106	-3.9	2,023
Sayward	VL	453	1.8	461
Tahsis	VL	973	-1.3	960
Zeballos	VL	240	3.8	249
Cowichan Valley		**73,212**	**2.2**	**74,821**
Duncan	C	4,753	2.3	4,861
Ladysmith	T	6,666	1.7	6,778
Lake Cowichan	T	2,947	2.0	3,006
North Cowichan	DM	26,113	1.9	26,604
East Kootenay		**58,194**	**1.6**	**59,122**
Cranbrook	C *	18,750	2.5	19,227
Elkford	DM	2,808	-0.1	2,804
Fernie	C	5,038	0.8	5,080
Invermere	DM	2,773	3.8	2,879
Kimberley	C	6,957	-0.3	6,934
Radium Hot Springs	VL	546	5.1	574
Sparwood	DM	4,111	-1.3	4,057
Fort Nelson-Liard		**6,080**	**4.5**	**6,356**
Fort Nelson	T	4,576	3.5	4,734
Fraser Valley		**230,045**	**2.0**	**234,589**
Chilliwack	DM	62,238	1.4	63,080
City of Abbotsford	C	109,140	2.4	111,708
Harrison Hot Springs	VL	926	14.0	1,056
Hope	DM	6,441	3.1	6,640
Kent	DM	5,013	1.6	5,094
Mission	DM	31,516	1.3	31,930
Fraser-Fort George		**102,403**	**2.0**	**104,499**
Mackenzie	DM	6,215	0.8	6,264
Mcbride	VL	767	3.4	793
Prince George	C	77,806	1.9	79,251
Valemount	VL	1,347	1.8	1,371
Greater Vancouver		**1,898,687**	**1.9**	**1,934,961**
Anmore	VL	991	2.3	1,014
Belcarra	VL	685	2.0	699
Burnaby	C	186,048	1.0	187,992
City of Langley	C	23,379	1.2	23,667
Coquitlam	C	105,367	2.0	107,455
Delta	DM	98,533	1.3	99,808
Langley	DM	82,757	2.8	85,069
Lions Bay	VL	1,386	0.4	1,391
Maple Ridge	DM	58,045	2.5	59,516
New Westminster	C	51,348	1.5	52,131
North Vancouver	C	43,116	0.9	43,499

Greater Vancouver continued...

Greater Vancouver continued...

North Vancouver	DM	82,997	1.4	84,136

British Columbia Municipal and Regional District Population Estimates

Name	Area Type	Estimate 1996†	1996-97 % Δ	Estimate 1997
Pitt Meadows	DM	13,885	2.8	14,273
Port Coquitlam	C	48,319	2.7	49,636
Port Moody	C	21,567	4.1	22,442
Richmond	C	153,937	2.3	157,537
Surrey	C	315,226	2.6	323,509
Vancouver	C	534,740	1.7	543,871
West Vancouver	DM	42,158	0.9	42,519
White Rock	C	17,855	0.7	17,986
Kitimat-Stikine		**45,108**	**2.1**	**46,046**
Hazelton	VL	361	-0.8	358
Kitimat	DM	11,490	1.3	11,636
New Hazelton	DM	852	1.6	866
Stewart	DM	888	-7.2	824
Terrace	C	13,231	2.8	13,608
Kootenay-Boundary		**33,927**	**0.2**	**33,986**
Fruitvale	VL	2,179	-0.2	2,175
Grand Forks	C	4,126	3.4	4,267
Greenwood	C	807	0.2	809
Midway	VL	705	-0.4	702
Montrose	VL	1,170	-0.3	1,167
Rossland	C	3,922	-1.4	3,866
Trail	C	7,956	-2.1	7,789
Warfield	VL	1,847	-1.8	1,814
Mount Waddington		**15,087**	**1.1**	**15,246**
Alert Bay	VL	631	-11.9	556
Port Alice	VL	1,375	-1.2	1,359
Port Hardy	DM	5,466	-0.4	5,442
Port McNeill	T	3,024	2.0	3,085
Nanaimo		**125,778**	**2.9**	**129,435**
Nanaimo	C	72,525	2.6	74,421
Parksville	C	9,791	3.2	10,103
Qualicum Beach	T	6,927	3.0	7,135
North Okanagan		**73,898**	**2.2**	**75,553**
Armstrong	C	4,034	2.1	4,119
Coldstream	DM	9,233	1.8	9,401
Enderby	C	2,841	2.3	2,907
Lumby	VL	1,742	3.8	1,809
Spallumcheen	DM	5,477	1.9	5,579
Vernon	C	32,916	2.6	33,756
Okanagan-Similkameen		**78,414**	**1.5**	**79,613**
Keremeos	VL	1,203	-0.7	1,195
Oliver	T	4,424	1.7	4,498
Osoyoos	T	4,150	3.5	4,295
Penticton	C	32,049	1.1	32,417
Princeton	T	2,916	1.6	2,964
Summerland	DM	10,906	0.7	10,987

British Columbia Municipal and Regional District Population Estimates

Name	Area Type	Estimate 1996†	1996-97 % Δ	Estimate 1997
Peace River		**58,446**	**1.3**	**59,233**
Chetwynd	DM	3,096	-1.4	3,054
Dawson Creek	C	11,530	0.6	11,594
Fort St. John	C	15,607	1.5	15,847
Hudson's Hope	DM	1,156	0.4	1,161
Pouce Coupe	VL	926	-0.1	925
Taylor	DM	1,070	1.6	1,087
Tumbler Ridge	DM	3,902	-1.4	3,848
Powell River		**20,603**	**2.2**	**21,062**
Powell River	DM	13,559	2.4	13,883
Sechelt Ind Gov Dist	IGD **	34	0.0	34
Skeena-Queen Charlotte		**25,674**	**0.2**	**25,724**
Masset	VL	1,341	-20.2	1,070
Port Clements	VL	579	2.9	596
Port Edward	DM	727	5.5	767
Prince Rupert	C	17,308	0.8	17,452
Squamish-Lillooet		**31,548**	**5.9**	**33,408**
Lillooet	DM	2,958	0.9	2,984
Pemberton	VL	893	31.4	1,173
Squamish	DM	14,468	3.3	14,949
Whistler	DM	7,562	11.1	8,403
Stikine		**1,439**	**2.1**	**1,469**
Sunshine Coast		**25,678**	**2.7**	**26,365**
Gibsons	T	3,858	0.6	3,881
Sechelt	DM	7,574	5.7	8,007
Sechelt Ind Gov Dist	IGD **	762	1.8	776
Thompson-Nicola		**122,754**	**2.4**	**125,681**
Ashcroft	VL	1,914	3.2	1,976
Cache Creek	VL	1,148	3.1	1,184
Chase	VL	2,534	1.7	2,578
Clinton	VL	752	0.5	756
Kamloops	C	79,019	1.9	80,507
Logan Lake	DM	2,563	1.0	2,589
Lytton	VL	334	-1.5	329
Merritt	C	7,886	1.2	7,979
British Columbia		**3,857,595**	**2.0**	**3,933,273**

Source:
Population Section, BC STATS,
Ministry of Finance and Corporate Relations,
Government of British Columbia.

Notes:
All figures correspond to municipal boundaries as of July 1st of the year stated.
All figures are as of July 1st of the year stated.

C = City, T = Town, VL = Village, DM = District Municipality,
IGD = Indian Government District

*** Denotes a boundary change between 1996 and 1997.***

**** Sechelt Indian Government District is split between Sunshine Coast and Powell River Regional Districts.***

† *1996 figures incorporate the 1996 Census and a PRELIMINARY estimate of net census undercount.*

Infoline

November 28, 1997

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also on the Internet at http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca

BC at a glance . . .

POPULATION (thousands)	Jul 1/97	% change on year ago
BC	3,933.3	2.0
Canada	30,286.6	1.1
GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT		% change
(BC - at market prices - $ millions)	1996	on year ago
Current Dollars	103,631	1.7
Constant (1986) Dollars	74,001	1.0
TRADE ($ millions)		
Manufacturing Shipments (seas. adj.) Sep	2,824	-2.4
Merchandise Exports (raw) Sep	2,110	-9.5
Retail Sales (seasonally adjusted) Sep	2,761	8.1
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX		% change
(all items - 1986=100)	Oct '97	on year ago
BC	139.5	0.6
Canada	138.2	1.5
LABOUR FORCE (thousands)		% change
(seasonally adjusted)	Oct '97	on year ago
Labour Force - BC	2,020	0.1
Employed - BC	1,840	1.0
Unemployed - BC	181	-7.9
		Oct '96
Unemployment Rate - BC *(percent)*	9.0	9.7
Unemployment Rate - Canada *(percent)*	9.1	10.0
INTEREST RATES (percent)	Nov 26/97	Nov 27/96
Prime Business Rate	5.50	4.75
Conventional Mortgages - 1 year	5.65	5.20
- 5 year	6.70	6.95
US/CANADA EXCHANGE RATE	Nov 26/97	Nov 27/96
(avg. noon spot rate) Cdn $	1.4248	1.3467
US $ *(reciprocal of above rate)*	0.7019	0.7426
AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS		% change
(industrial aggregate - dollars)	Sep '97	on year ago
BC	614.13	1.1
Canada	600.35	1.8

SOURCES:
Gross Domestic Product: Statistics Canada, revised by BC STATS
Population, Trade, Prices, Labour Force, Earnings: Statistics Canada
Interest Rates, Exchange Rates: Bank of Canada Weekly Financial Statistics

New on our Internet site

The 1997 Municipal population estimates are now located in the population section of our Web site. Population covering the period of 1976 to 1995 can also be found.

Released this week by BC STATS

- Current Statistics, November 1997
- Business Indicators, November 1997
- Tourism Room Revenue, August 1997

Next week

- Exports, August 1997

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